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ABSTRACT

A family history project which introduces students to the study of the family in connection with the immigration period in American history is described. The six-week project, an annual activity in Balboa Middle School (California) United States history classes, consists of four parts: (1) family history charts (family trees); (2) family interviews with the oldest relatives; (3) family history papers focusing on a single ancestor or one ancestral line; and (4) family history night for family and friends when the students exhibit family artifacts, family mobility maps, timelines, and family notebooks. Student materials consisting of directions explaining each part of the project and worksheets for recording personal and family information are included. The project provides alternatives for those students or their parents who do not wish to participate in the project as described. This document was selected by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Task Force on Public Confidence as descriptive of a promising practice or exemplary project worthy of highlighting for the California educational community. (EM)

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Family History Unit - U.S. History - Grade 8

Balboa Middle School
Ventura, California

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OUTSTANDING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FORM

Name of School, District or Agency: Balboa Middle School — Grade Levels: 6 - 7 - 8

Address: 247 Hill Road — Telephone (805) 642-4116

City: Ventura — State: CA — Zip: 93003

Name of Contact Person: Duane O. Rodgers — ACSA Region: XIII

Name of Course, Program, Project or Policy: Family History Unit - U. S. History - Grade 8

Date of Operation of Program or Project: December, 1983 - January, 1984

In 300 words or less please describe your program specifically enough for others to follow. Please include your program's
(1) primary purpose (how it benefits students)
(2) participants (grade levels of students, professional staff, community persons, etc)
(3) evaluation data (if available)

The Balboa Family History Project is an annual activity involving all U. S. History students, and each year includes some 350 students ages twelve to fourteen. Its purpose is to introduce the study of the family as a part of U. S. History in connection with the immigration period of national history. It promotes a personal identification with the course and events of American history which is lacking in the text material.

The project lasts six weeks, including winter vacation when students have more opportunity to spend time with their families. It includes four parts: family charts, interviews, written papers, and exhibits.

The first part is a simple geneological tracing of the students' ancestors as far back as possible. They are encouraged to try to trace at least one line back to the ancestor who migrated to this country. The second part is an interview by the student with the oldest available living relatives, most often one or more grandparent. The third part is a paper by each student developing a particular theme or topic from one ancestral line or person. Again, they are encouraged to relate the events of their family to what was occurring in the nation at large.

The final phase is Family History Night, during which students set up their displays in an exhibit to which families and friends are invited. The displays consist primarily of family heirlooms, photographs, and other treasures as well as mobility maps, time lines and family notebooks.

The entire project has met with tremendous enthusiasm from students, parents, teachers and administrators. The kids are proud and pleased to get coverage by the local newspaper. Parents sometimes comment that, "For the first time we have been sitting down as a family and talking together." Grandparents are delighted that their grandchildren are taking an interest in their backgrounds.

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NAME Duane O. Rodgers, Principal DATE Feb. 3, 1984

Enclose supporting or descriptive materials and return to ACSA Public Confidence Task Force, Public Relations Department, 1517 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

FAMILY HISTORY PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

You have been studying American History for almost a semester now. You have already learned quite a few new names, some dates and many facts. But so far it has been very far removed from you -- almost 200 years removed.

In this assignment, we hope you will see how close to history you really are. Have you ever thought that you may have been related to someone who fought with George Washington in the American Revolution? Maybe you are related to a pioneer who came across America to settle in the Old West. Everyone of us is related to people who lived and worked and contributed somehow to the history of our country. In this assignment you have a chance to find out about your ancestors.

Some of you may be fortunate enough to have available a family tree or a family history that someone has already researched. Others may be literally starting from scratch in looking for your ancestors. Still others may say, "I'm related to so-and-so." Let's find out exactly what those relationships are and how your ancestors fit into the history of the United States.

The project has four parts. You will receive detailed instructions for each part of the requirements. Here is a brief overview.

1. Family Chart: Trace back the history of your family as far as possible. The due date is _____.

2. Interview: Talk with at least two of your relatives (one male and one female), preferably the oldest living relatives that you have. The due date is _____.

3. Family History Paper: Write a paper giving details about one particular ancestral line or one particular person. Due date is _____.

4. Family History Night at Balboa: Prepare a display which can be presented to parents, relatives and friends on Family History Night which will be _____.

A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE

In all parts of this project, we want to respect you and your family's privacy. You should never feel obligated to include things in the project that make you feel uncomfortable. You should share only those things which you wish to. This is a project which we sincerely hope you will enjoy, since it will put you in contact with those people who mean the most to you -- your family.

If this project does not seem appropriate to you or your family, you have the option to choose a significant American historical figure and use him/her in place of yourself. You would then complete the project in reference to this person instead of yourself. If you choose this option, you must inform you teacher no later than _____, so that he/she can heop you find research information.

Please share this sheet with your parents so they are aware of the scope of the project.

FAMILY HISTORY CHARTS

Each student is required to trace his or her family as far back as possible. Some of you will have more information than others; don't worry, you simply do as much as you can.

Here are the steps to follow for this part of the project.

1. Complete a worksheet to be turned in and checked by your teacher. If you can trace back more than four generations, your teacher has continuation sheets which will permit you to chart these earlier ancestors. Just ask your teacher for the continuation charts.

2. Include as much information as you have available. Birth and death places are important along with the dates. They will especially help you when you are writing your family history paper later in the project. See the example below for the correct method of recording your information.

3. Your teacher will check your worksheet and point out any errors you have made in the method of recording.

4. On your final copy, identify each ancestor who migrated to the United States from another country. You might use a symbol such as a red dot next to the name for this identification. Be sure to make a legend or key and explain what your symbol means.

5. Your final chart must be done in the blue or black ink.

6. Title your chart.

7. Worksheets are due no later than _____.

   Final copies are due _____.

8. Students who would like to get more detailed may wish to fill out Family Group sheets. These sheets permit you to list all the children in a particular family along with their parents. Ask your teacher for Family Group forms. (This is not a requirement but an added extra for those who are interested.)

9. Record your information in the following manner:

   Name: Include the individual's full name; women should be listed with their maiden names.

   Date: The sequence should be day, followed by the month, and finally the complete year. The month should be in letters - not numbers - so it will not be confused with the day. Months can be abbreviated.

   Places: The sequence should be the town, followed by the county, and finally the state or country.

   Name: George Edward Smith
   Born: 17 Dec. 1859
   Place born: Evansville (Washington) Illinois

FAMILY INTERVIEWS

We have deliberately given you this assignment over the winter vacation because we know that many of your see your grandparents and other relatives mainly on family holidays. This will give you an opportunity to make the interviews required for this part of the assignment.

In class we will be learning techniques for making good interviews. The content of your interview is also important. In your interviews, you are to include questions on at least five different topics as follows:

These topics are required:

Work (this should refer to paid work - hot household chores)
School
Family life (include differences in the treatment of boys and girls in such areas as chores, privileges, dating, education and career expectations).

Choose at least two of these topics:

Religion or beliefs	Clothing
Politics	Houses
Leisure time activities	Mobility
Family celebrations	Other (you name it)

You are to write a minimum of three questions per topic. Write your questions in such a way that the answers will be descriptions or explanations. One-word answers are often not very useful in an interview. Include questions which will encourage the person being interviewed to describe what was happening in the nation while he/she was growing up.

You are required to have two interviews; one is to be with a male relative and one with a female. Most of you will be interviewing grandparents, but if you have a favorite or interesting great aunt or uncle, interview them. Of course you will be expected to talk with your parents throughout the project.

Perhaps you don't have any older family members that you can interview personally. Here are two options:

1. Because of the vacation period, you will have time to write letters to relatives living far away. Carefully write out your interview questions, leaving plenty of space for them to answer. Enclose it with a letter explaining the project. Encourage them to add any interesting items not covered in your questions.

2. Interview any two older persons (perhaps neighbors or friends) that you can, using the same type of questions you developed for family history questions.

You must complete the interviews by _____. You will not be expected to turn in your complete interviews. We will have a written exercise in class on _____ in which you will use the information from your interviews as the basis for your answers.

FAMILY HISTORY PAPERS

By now you have gathered a great deal of information about your family. It's time to put some of this in written form, but you must do some organizing first. Here are the steps you should follow.

1. Narrow your scope. Don't try to write a paper that includes every one of your ancestors. Choose one single line or even one person on which to focus.

2. Choose one or two themes for your paper. Here are some examples:

   a. Four Generations of Bricklayers in the Hermandson Family
   b. The Education of a Norwegian Immigrant: My Grandmother Bairn
   c. The Raibers Who Fought for Our Country
   d. Growing Up in New York: Grandmother Kimball
   e. Grandpa Short: One of the First Railroaders

3. Make an outline of the main topics and subtopics you wish to include in your paper. This will help you stay with your topic. The outline is due on _____.

4. Whenever possible, include significant events in U.S. History in which your ancestors participated.

5. Write a rough draft of your paper.

6. Prepare your final paper. Include a title page. You may also wish to prepare a special cover.
   Final papers are due on _____ and must be written in black or blue ink.

EXAMPLE

TITLE

Name

Teacher
American History
Date

FAMILY HISTORY NIGHT AT BALBOA

_____is our day at Balboa. We have reserved the cafetorium that evening so that we can set up displays and invite your parents and family friends to share what we have discovered in our project. You have several types of displays to choose from.

1. FAMILY ARTIFACTS. While you are visiting with your grandparents (and parents) during vacation, ask if you can see some of the family keepsakes (heirlooms). Then ask if you can use them for our display. Some possible interesting items are photographs, newspaper clippings, awards, clothing, toys, household tools, albums, birth certificates, china, needlework.

Since these items are precious to your family, they will not be left at the school but will only be present the evening of the display. You will be expected to stay with your display at all times.

After vacation we will show you an example of how you might set up your artifact display. Your display should be no larger than 20" x 36".

2. FAMILY MOBILITY MAP. Using an outline map (local, state, or national), trace the movements your family has made in the United States. You will need to pinpoint locations and dates. It would also be useful to indicate the reason for each move. You should use two different colors to distinguish your mother's family movements from your father's.

Your map should be 36" x 40". Map patterns for you to trace onto butcher paper will be available. Your name, teacher's name and period number should be on your map. Your map should have a title and a legend.

3. TIME LINE. Using a chart of events in U.S. History, correlate your family's activities with the dates of national events. Include a brief description of the impact the national events had on your family.

Small illustrations will add interest to your chart.

Your chart should be 36" x 40". Your teacher will have a timeline of U.S. historical events for you to copy.

Your chart should have a title. Your name, teacher's name and period number should be on your chart.

4. FAMILY HISTORY NOTEBOOK. Prepare a notebook of family history. You will need to use a standard size 3-ring notebook. Make a special cover for your notebook. Inside the notebook include your family charts, family group sheets, short biographies of family members, photocopies of documents/photographs, and perhaps maps showing the locations and movements of your family.

5. FAMILY MOBILITY MAP FOR ONE FAMOUS AMERICAN FAMILY. Famous American families such as the Adams, Roosevelts and Kennedys could be used instead of your own family.

Use the same instructions as in number 2 above.

6. TIME LINE FOR A FAMOUS AMERICAN FAMILY. Use the same instructions as in number 3 above using a famous American family as your comparison.

Note: Students who choose an artifact display must be present on Family History Night to watch over their items.

???

WHO AM I?

I am a very important person. I may never be president. . . or even get my name in print. But to me and my family, I am a VIP. So I'm putting myself on record as someone special. Here follows some of my accomplishments and ideas.

_____
Student Name

I was born

date _____

place _____
(city) (county) (state)

At the time that I was born my family consisted of (give names and birthdates)

mother _____

father _____

brothers and sisters

Since that time there have/have not been additions to the family.(Give names and birthdates of any additions.)

When I was first born we lived at _____
(street)
_____.
(city) (state)
Since then we have moved _____ times. The other places we have lived are (give addresses and dates)

The house that I liked best was the one we lived in at _____
_____. I liked this place because:

I'd like to say something about my family. Each member of the family adds a special quality. Here are some of the things that come into my mind when I think of my family.

3

In my family we celebrate several holidays. (Describe your most important holidays and tell how each is celebrated in your family. This could include where, with whom, particular ceremonies or traditions and special foods.)

The responsibilities that I have in my home are:

The responsibilities that my brothers/sisters have at home are:

When I was _____ years old, I was sent off to school; it seems to have become routine practice ever since. The name of my first school was _____

_____ and it was located at _____

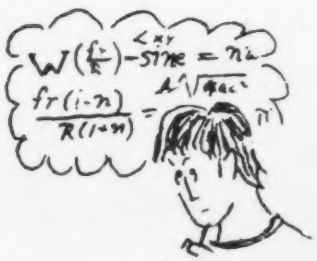
The thing that I remember most about that first school is:

Since then I have gone to _____ number of other schools. The names and locations of these schools are:

If you were to ask me what kind of student I am, I would have to describe myself by saying that:

At Balboa Junior High School I am now in _____ grade. The subjects that I have this quarter are:

Subject	Grade first quarter
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



At school my favorite subject is:
I like it because:

My least favorite subject is:
I dislike it because:

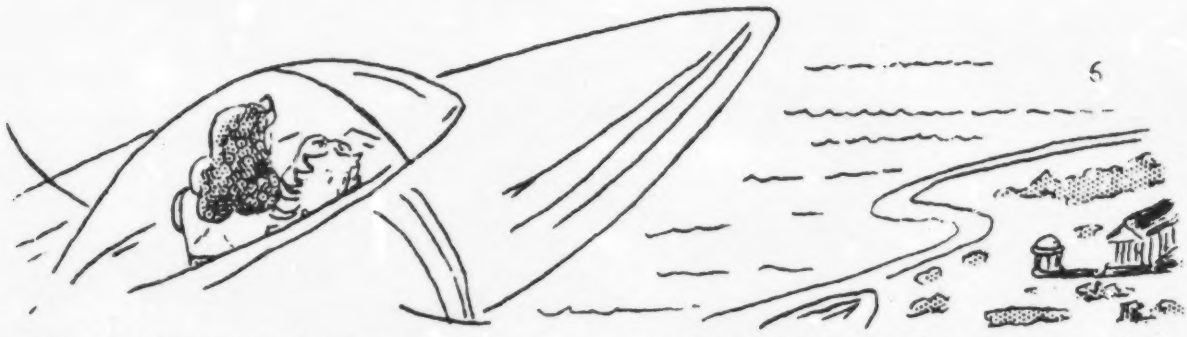
My best friends at school are:

And my very best friend is:

I like him/her because:

If asked to write a paragraph telling what I think of Balboa as a school, I would say that . . .

There are several people who have had a big influence on my life. Some of these people and the reasons why they have influenced me are:



I do like/do not like to travel. In my travels (whether I liked them or not!) the most important and interesting places have been (include names, locations, descriptions and dates of visiting):

The most interesting person I ever met is _____.

The reason that I think he/she is interesting is because;

As I said, I may never become president (but then who knows?). Nevertheless, I've done some things that I'm proud of. The achievements I would like to have people remember about me are(describe achievements including dates and places where appropriate):

SOME EXTRAS . . .

Five things I love to do:

Three things that make me laugh:

Two things that make me mad:

My favorite

color

food

expression

book

TV show

sport

hobby

possession

Well, this tells you a little about me as I am now. But the teacher has left out some important things in this outline. Fortunately the teacher left a little space for me to do my own thing. Because before I end this description, I want to add this about myself: